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Notary: For legalization of a document

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A Notary is a state official appointed by the state government that is the governor, lieutenant governor, state secretary, who serves to be an impartial witness to legalize any document or when any important documents are signed to prevent any type of fraud.

The duties of a [notary](#) may vary following the state but he doesn't have the right to refuse any legal document based on caste, religion, sex, or even nationality. The document that needs to be notarized is the documents related to property, power of attorney, business affairs, affidavit, trusts, etc.

Who can be a notary?

The eligibility criteria and the duties of a notary may vary from state to state, but in common a person should be:

18 years of age

Should reside in the state

Should have a clear background that he should not have any criminal charge, most of the states don't appoint a notary with a criminal case or charged for any reason.

Notarized Document:

After verifying the documents, signature, identities, the notary marks the document with the government stamp or seal. Thus any document that is certified by a notary is said to be a notarized document. Role of a notary in the [notarization of the document](#): The role of the notary is not fixed, it is according to the government of the state, so there is a variance for the roles from state to state. Some of the common roles are:

- Identification and verification: The notary is supposed to identify and verify the signees for the document and make a record of the observations and the documents.

For verification of the signs on the document, the signer must be physically present, so that no kind of fraud may be possible.

The notary has to verify that the signer knows and understands the term and policies for the document the signer is signing. The notary has full power to refuse to make any document notarized if he finds that the signer is intoxicated, medicated, or is unable to understand the document.

- Identification of the signer: To prevent any kind of fraud its very important to verify the signer, and for this, the notary may use any of the following:
 1. Personal Knowledge: States like California allow this type of identification, in this method the notary knows the signer personally.
 2. ID Proofs: These are the most common method of identification and most of the states allow it. Photo ID proofs like a driving license, a passport can be used for identification.
 3. A Credible identifying Witness: A third person who knows the signer can affirm or verify the identity of the signer.

- Re-checking the documents: The notary must ensure that the document has all the essential elements of the notary certificate and should meet the requirements of the state. The re-checking ensures that the name on the identity proof and the document is the same, the date of the day entered is correct (on the day when notarization is done) there is no mistake and no blank spaces, as these blank spaces may be later used to modify the document for fraud.
- Journal Entry: It is an essential step in the process of notarization. The notary should enter all the relevant information related to the document like the date, time, document details, signer's name address, signature, method of verification and the fee charged. The journal entry helps to get the information when there is any doubt on the notarization.
- Notarial Certificate: This is the final step in the [process of notarization](#) of a document. When the process is complete with all the necessary information the notary signs it and affixes his seal at the proper place, keeping in mind that the seal should not overlap any alphabet of the signature.

Places where the notaries are available:

The notaries are available at many places like:

- Financial Institution: The local bank or the credit union have a notary. Even if the person doesn't have an account in the bank then also the letter can be notarized by paying a minimal fee.
- Business: There are a lot of chances that the local and big-business have notaries, like shipping stores, office supply retailers, tax preparers, etc.
- Online Notary: In some cases, the documents can be notarized online, in this process the notary may identify and record the signature by video.

So, [Notary](#) is a public official who has an essential duty of legalizing any document. If the notary doubts any document or on the signature or the ID proofs presented then he has the right to refuse to validate it, however, the notary does not have any right to refuse any document based on caste, religion, gender, or nationality. The duties of the notary vary from state to state but certain common steps need to be followed for the notarization of any document. The notary may also charge a small amount for notarization.

Contact Details

CORPORATE OFFICES

GetLegal Headquarters

1300 Summit Avenue, Suite 670

Fort Worth, TX 76102

Sales: 844-GET-LEGAL

Fax: 817-359-7077

CALIFORNIA OFFICE

25 Taylor Street, #617-GL

San Francisco, CA 94102

Website: <https://www.getlegal.com/>

